

September 24, 2004

Operations Division  
Regulatory Branch  
Project Manager  
Michael Farabee  
(504) 862-2292

SPECIAL PUBLIC NOTICE

SUBJECT: EXPLOSIVE REMOVAL OF OIL AND GAS PLATFORMS IN STATE  
WATERS, INCLUDING THE GULF OF MEXICO

In cooperation with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), NOAA Fisheries, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, referred to collectively as agencies from this point forward, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District (MVN) is preparing to programmatically assess and enter into consultation regarding potential impacts to endangered species, and/or marine mammals that might occur as a result of site clearance operations, to include the use of explosives for oil and gas platform removals.

In an effort to minimize potential impacts to such species during the time necessary to complete such consultation, MVN is requesting that holders of permits and/or operators (requestor) in state leased waters notify this office no later than 120 days before any structure is scheduled for removal by explosive methods. Notification specifics include: (1) complete identification of the platform(s) including location, (2) the size of the platform (number and size of legs and pilings, etc.), (3) the removal technique to be employed (bulk or shaped charge, multiple or single shot, etc.), (4) the amount and type of explosive per charge, (5) site clearance verification technique (trawls, divers, etc.), and (6) the number and size of well conductors to be removed and the proposed removal technique. A standardized form for such notifications is enclosed. Diagrams depicting the location(s) and type(s) of structure(s) to be removed should be provided on 8.5" x 11" paper, be legible and clearly detail the information listed above.

MVN will use the information provided, plus comments from the agencies and other appropriate organizations, to determine the potential for impacts on endangered species and/or marine mammals. The programmatic approach discussed above should limit the necessity for case-by-case review. The results of the programmatic assessment and any changes to this notification requirement will be made public through future notices.

Permit holders and/or operators should not proceed until they receive notification from the District Engineer, MVN.

MVN is requesting you provide any information you may have on the number of removals/site clearances, explosive or mechanical, that you have performed in the last 5 years and the number of removals you can reasonably expect to act on during the next 5 years. Any additional information you may have relative to such actions to include standard removal and site clearance techniques is also requested.

You are requested to communicate the information contained in this notice to any other parties whom you deem likely to have interest in the matter.

Ronald J. Ventola  
Chief, Regulatory Branch

Enclosures